The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

FIRST INTERNATIONAL LOAN EXHIBITION
DEVOTED TO CMA COLLECTION OPENS IN NARA, JAPAN
Nara National Museum Makes Exclusive Loans to CMA
For Cleveland Exhibition of Early Buddhist Art

Fact Sheet

Who: The principals in this major international exchange are directors Hiroyasu Uchida, Nara National Museum, and Robert P. Bergman, Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA); and curators Kajitani Ryōji, Nara National Museum, and Michael R. Cunningham, CMA. Nara museum officials, at CMA request, enlisted the cooperation of Suntory Art Museum director Yoshio Tsuchiya and curator Ishida Yoshiya.

What: **Two major exhibitions** of about one hundred extraordinary works of art each and accompanying fully illustrated catalogues.
The **first collaboration** in Japan between a national and a private museum.

Where & When: **Highlights of Asian Painting from the Cleveland Museum of Art**
Nara National Museum, February 21 through March 29
Suntory Art Museum, Tokyo, April 28 through June 21

Buddhist Treasures from Nara
Cleveland Museum of Art, August 9 through September 27
Includes 12 "National Treasures" and 42 "Important Cultural Properties;" release forthcoming.

Why: The concept for the current exchange between Nara and Cleveland dates to 1992 when the three national museums in Japan—Tokyo, Kyoto, and Nara—were authorized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (*Bunko-chō*) to organize exchange exhibitions with three prominent Western museums. The Cleveland/Nara exchange is the third and final such exchange, preceded by an exchange between the Tokyo National Museum and the National Museum of Belgium in Brussels (1994) and the Kyoto National Museum and the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (1996).

Acquisition and exhibition of Asian art has been a CMA emphasis since the museum was incorporated in 1913. Harvard University Orientalist Langdon Warner served as the museum's field agent for Asian art; his scholarship includes a volume published by CMA in 1923 about the Buddhist sculptures made around Nara in the 7th century, *Japanese Sculpture of the Suiko Period*.

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The museum's special relationship with Japan continued with the post-war service of CMA's then-curator of Oriental and Near Eastern art, the late Howard Coonley Hollis (1899-1995), as chief of the Arts and Monuments Division at General Douglas McArthur's general headquarters. Hollis's successor in Japan, Sherman E. Lee, later joined CMA's curatorial staff and served as CMA director from 1958 until his retirement in 1983.

The Asian collection subsequently amassed is unquestionably the most distinguished collection formed since the early 20th century. CMA is the only museum whose exhibitions, such as **Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art** (1983) and **The Triumph of Japanese Style: 16th-Century Art in Japan** (1991), have been allowed by Japanese lenders to unite its own works with National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties from Japan, many never previously lent outside Japan.

How: **Highlights of Asian Painting from the Cleveland Museum of Art** and **Buddhist Treasures from Nara** are joint projects of the Nara National Museum and the Cleveland Museum of Art, under the auspices of an exhibition exchange program of the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Major funding for the exhibitions is provided by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. The exhibitions are supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, an agency of the United States government. Additional support is provided by Japan Airlines. Funding has also been provided by Audio Technica, Bridgestone/Firestone Trust Fund, Honda of America Mfg., Inc., NACCO Industries, Inc., Nishikawa Rubber Company/The Standard Products Company, and Nordson Corporation.

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